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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2485

Nov. 23, 1990

GOOD NEWS FOR TURKEY LOVERS -- There will be plentiful supplies of turkey for the holiday season, USDA economists say. Frozen stocks on Sept. 30 were at near record levels, up 8 percent from last year and fourth-quarter turkey production is expected to be up 5 percent. Retail prices should run slightly above last year. The current-year wholesale prices of 63 to 64 cents will continue in 1991. However, consumers will find hams less plentiful this year than last and the prices will be higher. Frozen ham stocks on Sept. 30 were 22 percent below last year and fourth-quarter commercial pork production is expected to be down 3 percent from last year. Wholesale ham prices rose to over \$1 per pound in late September, but have not exhibited the typical strong seasonal upward pattern this fall. Last year, ham prices reached only \$1 per pound late in the holiday buying season. Contact: Leland Southard (202) 219-0767.

USDA TO CHANGE BUTTERFAT FORMULA -- USDA has proposed reducing the value of butterfat in the formula determining milk prices paid dairy farmers under all federal milk marketing orders. The change, according to Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, is based on the unanimous wishes of major sectors of the U.S. dairy industry that testified at a national hearing July 31. "Paying dairy farmers less for the butterfat in the milk they sell to processors will recognize the lowered value of butterfat in today's marketplace caused by consumers' changing preferences," Haley said. Contact: Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179.

NEW YEARBOOK PORTRAYS PEOPLE -- The 1990 Yearbook of Agriculture, "Americans in Agriculture: Portraits of Diversity," highlights people who work in all aspects of American agriculture. "The richest resource of American agriculture is its people," says Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter. "The initiative and creativity and plain hard work of these millions of people are the key to our efficiency and our ability to compete in the world marketplace." For a media review copy, call: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445. Media only, please.

EEP FACTS -- To counter the European Community's unfair subsidization of ag exports in world markets, USDA continues aggressive use of its Export Enhancement Program. EEP initiatives have targeted virtually every market where US producers face EC subsidies in sales of wheat, barley, barley malt, semolina, sorghum, rice, vegetable oil, poultry & eggs. The US has now awarded export bonuses of nearly \$2.98 billion to counter these subsidies. Since the program's inception, EEP-assisted sales have annually accounted for up to 65 percent of U.S. wheat exports, 63 percent of flour exports, 98 percent of barley exports, 10 percent of barley malt exports, 12 percent of semolina exports, 10 percent of rice exports, 26 percent of vegetable oil exports, 29 percent of frozen poultry exports and 5 percent of table egg exports. Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.

BENEFICIAL BUGS PATROL TEXAS CABBAGE -- Thousands of tiny wasps have jobs on Texas farms this week -- protecting cabbage from caterpillar munching -- thanks to the wasps' great-grandparents, which were reared by a USDA lab. Last September, USDA scientists in Yakima, Wash., supplied a few hundred wasps to a firm in Texas that mass-produces beneficial bugs. The descendants of these wasps are now being released in Texas, which grows much of the nation's cabbage. "Our research has shown that the wasps can provide a new way to reduce insect damage to cabbage, broccoli and related vegetables without using insecticides," says USDA Entomologist K. Duane Biever. Contact: K. Duane Biever (509) 575-5877.

USDA NEEDS PUBLIC INPUT ON WHEAT CLASSIFYING -- USDA's Federal Grain Inspection Service needs public input on the classification of the new wheat variety Pioneer 2163. A variety of Hard Red Winter wheat, Pioneer 2163 has the milling & baking properties of hard wheat, but looks like Soft Red Winter Wheat. How the wheat kernels look is influenced by environmental conditions. Some samples of last year's crop were graded soft red or mixed. "FGIS is working with the industry to gather additional information and explore possible alternative for classifying Pioneer 2163," says FGIS Administrator John C. Foltz. Contact: Dana Stewart (202) 382-0378.

MIGHTY MITE TO THE RESCUE -- A mite from Mediterranean Europe, now adapting to its new home in the U.S., could give farmers relief from a weed that binds crop plants in a deadly embrace, says a USDA scientist. "This small mite has been given the OK for a big job -- controlling one of the worst weeds strangling corn, wheat and other U.S. crops," says USDA Entomologist Sara S. Rosenthal. The weed, field bindweed is an "out of control" morning glory, Rosenthal says, which is most serious in the West & Midwest, where corn & wheat are particularly hard hit. Contact: Sara S. Rosenthal (406) 994-4892.

COCKTAILS FOR WEEDS -- "Cocktail time" is fast approaching for crop-hindering weeds, but few of them are likely to survive the party. USDA Agronomist Roy J. Smith, Jr., has been studying the "cocktail" approach to weed control, blending chemicals & natural weapons like fungi to solve multiple problems in a single sweep. Smith doesn't invent the ingredients; his specialty is the combinations. Using fungi & herbicides, he's blended substances capable of hitting two weeds at once, and one blend even goes after three. While Smith works primarily in rice, he says there's no reason why similar combinations can't be organized against weeds in other crops. Contact: Roy J. Smith, Jr. (501) 673-2661.

FULL GATT COVERAGE FROM BRUSSELS -- Brenda Curtis will cover the GATT trade talks from Brussels. There will be daily news stories on USDA's Radio Newsline (202) 488-8358 or 8359. Curtis will provide coverage from Dec. 3 through the scheduled conclusion of the talks Dec. 8. Also, look for Agritape features & an Agriculture USA in the coming weeks for in-depth stories about these important trade discussions. Contact: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1746 -- There's a renewed interest in alternative fuels in the wake of today's rising gas prices & the crisis in the Persian Gulf. On this edition of Agriculture USA, Gary Crawford reports on the search for alternative fuels. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1227 -- Electric Avenue; buying water filters; misinterpreting nutrition information; a mail order holiday. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1744 -- USDA News Highlights; dairy outlook; world almond & hazelnut crop; a Soviet farmer's observations of Iowa farms; sci-fi insect control.

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1347 -- "Temper Tester" for bees; moth mating calls; salad for singles; disease-resistant lettuce; "over-achiever" plants. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Fri., Nov. 30, ag prices, cotton & wool outlook, world dairy situation; Mon., Dec. 3, world ag outlook; Tues., Dec. 4, crop/weather update; Tues., Dec. 11, ag income & finance outlook, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation, world ag/grain situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EST, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE
(Week of Nov. 22, 24 & 26, 1990)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on improving grain inspection; DeBoria Janifer takes a look at the dietary analysis program; Will Pemble reports on controlling super-resistant horn flies.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA Meteorologist Ray Motha gives the latest weather & crop update; USDA Economist Kate Buckley on fruit outlook; USDA Economist Gary Lucier on specialty produce; USDA Economist Ed Allen on wheat outlook; Steve Plotkin, Office of Technology Assessment, on the use of alternative fuels.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on wholesale marketing; Lynn Wyvill on the new dietary guidelines.

Available on Satellite Westar IV, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EST
SATURDAY 10:00 - 10:45 a.m., EST
MONDAY 8:00 - 8:45 a.m., EST

OFFMIKE

FOREMOST ISSUE...in the region served by Steve Bugbee (KXXX/KQLS, Colby, Kan.) is groundwater management. Steve says new regulations are going into effect in the water district and producers are concerned and conserving more water. Ten inches of snow has given winter wheat a good start; it is beginning to emerge.

PASTURE...is looking great, thanks to recent rains, says Bob Givens (KGNC, Amarillo, Texas). It's adding to the smiles of many cattle producers. Bob says prices in the area are at record highs and yards are full. Cotton producers have something to smile about too, a big crop is being harvested and prices are strong.

REMOTE BROADCAST...from an elementary school 4th grade class was part of Farm City Week activities, says Christi Bentley (WRFD, Columbus, Ohio). Weather problems and delayed planting threatened the corn crop earlier this year, but Christi says the harvest is surprising many producers by coming in better than expected.

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QUALITY IS UP...but yields are lower for corn, says Tom Beavers (KMA, Shenandoah, Iowa), and the driest harvest in years. Two weeks of hot, dry weather before harvest dropped corn moisture to 12 percent in the field. Corn borer damage was less than expected. Soybean harvest was good, with yields higher than levels last year. New voice at KMA is Randy Rasmussen, formerly of KMNS, Sioux City, Iowa.

CORRECTIONS...were received from Terry Henne (WSGW, Saginaw, Mich.) saying his ag communicator of the year award was from three county farm bureaus in the state, not from the state organization. Sally Smith (WMEQ, Menomonie, Wisc.) says Pam Jahnke is the new farm director at WTSO, Madison, Wisc., not WTFO. Thanks for the calls. I think I've got it right this time.

Vic Powell
VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division